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# First Baptist Church,

Halifax, N. S.



## Pastoral Letter.

## PASTOR'S STUDY,

Saturday, May 19th, 1894.

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Our Churches are asked to state in letters to the Association what proportion of their families maintain Family Worship. It was noticeable at the Association which met with us last year that the answers to this question were not at all satisfactory. In some cases no answer was attempted, because the facts were not known; in others, the answer given was little more than a mere guess; and in cases where definite and fairly accurate reply was made there appeared a decidedly insufficient use of this priceless means of grace.

Doubtless the question came to be asked from conviction that more attention to family religion was needed, and with the attendant hope that a knowledge of facts would beget measures for bringing about a better state of things in this regard.

To the Family Altar we are in no danger of attaching over-much importance. Most benign indeed is its influence upon parents and children, upon guests and servants. By it a worldly spirit, which is ever pervasive and obtrusive, is held in check, and a stimulus imparted daily to every member of the household to "seek first the kingdom of God." Back to the Family Altar, many a one conspicuous for godliness, traces the inspiration of his faithful career. One such, whose life

has been a blessing to the ends of the earth, tells us that in his early home no pressure of business, no coming or going, no joy or excitement was ever permitted to interfere with this exercise. "And never," he writes, "in temple or cathedral, on mountain or in glen, can I hope to feel that the Lord God is more near, more visibly walking and talking with men, than when kneeling there under the humble roof of thatch and oaken wattles."

Frequently and fittingly are we exhorted to make much of public religious services,—to mingle in the worship of the Sabbath, in the Bible study of the Bible School, and in the prayers of the mid-week meeting; but alongside let there come the exhortation, that we allow no day to pass without having the household assemble to hear a message out of the Divine Book and to offer unto God thanksgiving and petition. Abundance of excuses for neglect of this may be found if sought, but not all excuses deemed valid of men are so regarded on High.

Your pastor is not yet aware how largely this duty and privilege is attended to or disregarded among his people. He hopes, however, to see improvement in this matter, as there is certainly room for it. Sad it is to think of children growing up in homes where there is no such thing as unitedly bowing down in gratitude and dependence before Jehovah, especially if the father or mother or both profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. Nothing that we can leave our children can at all compensate for a daily lack so serious as this.

A thoughtful consideration of this subject is tenderly urged upon every one to whom this pastoral epistle comes. If you maintain a Family Altar, then seek fresh grace for its effective continuance. If you once maintained it but have allowed the fires of devotion to die out, then have those fires rekindled without delay and kept burning ever after. If you have not set up such an Altar, do it now, hard though it be. The profit from it to yourself and others will far overtop all costs and much exceed your best expectations.

Upon the enclosed slip you find a question which you will do me the favor to answer and return before the close of the present month. Please do not take it for granted that I already know the answer in your particular case. Family Worship is sometimes neglected where most might think it sustained, and it is sometimes sustained where few would suppose. A reply to the inquiry is desired from every one, not only that we may be able to fill a blank in our letter to the Association, but that the pastor may better understand the condition and needs of his flock. And if by this pastoral letter, and the thought awakened at making reply, more than ever shall be made of Family Worship in some homes, while in other homes its observance shall be brought about, then large will be the individual and general good accruing therefrom.

Awaiting your response, and praying that God's richest gifts may be granted to you and your loved ones,

I remain, with ardent desire for your spiritual welfare,

Your affectionate pastor,

A. C. CHUTE.

**This is designed for the Pastor only.**

Do you sustain Family Worship in  
your home ?

Once a day or twice ? .....

If once, at what time ? .....

Name .....

Address .....

Remarks :